

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ABSENT CHILDREN SUBJECT OF SPECIAL DOCKET IN WAYNE COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT; PROJECT TO 'CREATE PATTERN' FOR STATE OF MICHIGAN

DETROIT, MI, October 9, 2002 – The Wayne County Circuit Court has created a special docket to help find court wards who are absent without permission.

The absent children have run away or been illegally removed from a legal placement. The person who improperly removes a child from a legal placement is often a relative.

The special docket, which has been assigned to Wayne County Circuit Judge Michael Hathaway, is the outgrowth of a state-wide work group created several weeks ago by Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan and Family Independence Agency Director Douglas Howard.

“Wayne County’s experience with this special docket will help create the pattern for the way these cases are handled across Michigan,” Corrigan said.

The work group, of which Hathaway is a member, also includes Howard, FIA Deputy Director Mark Jasonowicz, FIA Legislative Liaison Bill Kordenbrock, FIA Outstate Operations Director Jim Nye, Wayne County Zone Manager Margaret Warner, William Newhouse, Assistant Director of Trial Court Services for the State Court Administrative Office, and Bay County Probate Chief Judge Karen A. Tighe. Tighe is also presiding judge of Bay County Circuit Court’s family division.

Hathaway said he plans to schedule hearings “as soon as possible, probably next week.”

The special docket will focus on absent children up to 15 years old, with special emphasis on children up to 12 years old. Hathaway plans to subpoena family members “and anyone else who can shed light on where these children may be.”

Hathaway said initial hearings will focus on who might have information about the children’s whereabouts.

Absent children are featured on the FIA Child Locator web site at www.michigan.gov/fia. Anyone with information about a child featured on the web site can call the toll-free Tip Line at 1-866-729-0026.

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